



# California Public Utilities Commission

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## News Release

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### **PUC INVESTIGATION RESULTS IN CRIMINAL CHARGES AGAINST ILLEGAL MOVER**

SAN FRANCISCO, July 15, 2003 - The California Public Utilities Commission (PUC) today announced that after a PUC staff investigation, the Los Angeles City Attorney's Office filed criminal charges on July 2, 2003, against Ronen Perez, owner and president of Ford Moving and Storage, Inc., an unlicensed household goods mover based in Van Nuys, CA.

The PUC's Consumer Protection and Safety Division staff investigated Ford Moving and Storage after receiving consumer complaints alleging overcharges, goods being held hostage for higher payment, and damages to personal belongings. The investigation disclosed that Perez continued to perform moving services after his PUC household goods carrier permit was revoked in August 2002. The investigation also uncovered violations of PUC consumer protection rules that movers are required to follow.

In its ongoing efforts to clamp down on illegal moving companies, the PUC submitted the results of its investigation to the Los Angeles City Attorney's Office and requested that a criminal complaint be filed against Perez.

The L.A. City Attorney charged Perez and Ford Moving and Storage with 15 misdemeanor counts: two counts of grand theft, which carries a maximum penalty of one year in jail and \$1,000 fine; two counts of advertising as a household goods carrier without holding a permit; one count of operating as a household goods carrier without a license; one count of operating with a suspended or revoked license; and nine counts of failing to follow PUC rules and regulations for household goods carriers. Penalties for the license- and PUC-related counts carry a maximum penalty of 90 days in jail and/or a \$1,000 fine.

Arraignment is scheduled for July 16 in the Los Angeles Superior Court.

The Public Utilities Code makes it a crime to engage or attempt to engage in transporting used household goods without a valid PUC license. Consumers using unlicensed movers may suffer irreparable losses of personal belongings with little means of recovery.

Consumers are encouraged to call the PUC toll-free at 1-800-366-4782 to check the licensing status of household goods movers.

For more information on the PUC please visit [www.cpuc.ca.gov](http://www.cpuc.ca.gov).

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